THE STRONGER SOUL

By Hedwig von Puttkamer.

Translated, with introductory comment, by William L. McPherson.

War has an enormous effect in simplifying life—in ironing out the sophistications in human relations which peace, ease and security foster. The Other Woman stalks through the fiction and drama of peace. But in the hard scheme of abnegation and sacrifice which war imposes she loses her background. The great lessons of the war will have to be unlearned in large measure before she fully recovers it.

The following story, by Hedwig von Puttkamer, deals with the problem of the Eternal Triangle as war has affected it. It is interesting not only in itself, but for the sincerity with which it illustrates one of war's inevitable moral reactions.

IT WAS a picture of tranquil domestic happiness. The big hanging lamp, with its yellow shade, filled the comfortable room with that homelike half-light which goes so well with intimate family associations.

At the round table sat a mother and a child, both busily occupied. Only now and then a word interrupted the brooding silence. The graceful, blond head of the young wife was bent low over a piece of needlework. Her eyelids drooped down toward her delicate cheeks. Her small mouth was tightly closed, as if it retained a secret which it would never venture to confide to any one.

The twelve-year-old boy had propped his arms on the table and was studying, half aloud. Now he lifted his eyes, pushed the book toward his mother, and said:

"Listen, please, mama!"

She nodded, but without glancing up. The clear, boyish voice began to recite the Bible lesson:

"Then came she and worshipped him, saying: 'Lord, help me!'

"But he answered and said: 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.'

"And she said: 'Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.'"

He halted and looked inquiringly at his mother. Was it all right so far?

She nodded again and moved her lips as though she would say something. No word came, however; only an indistinct sound, almost like a groan. The boy went on reciting in his clear, childish voice. The verses meant nothing to him—mere words learned by rote.

When he ended and said a grace he joyfully clapped the Bible together, pushed his chair back, ran to his mother, clasped her with both arms and raised up her head. The light fell on her deathly pale face; her eyes remained half closed and big tears fell, one after another, like shining pearls, over her colorless cheeks.

The boy had no idea why his mother wept. She wept so often nowadays. Shyly he laid his dark, curly head against her blond hair and whispered softly, again and again:

"Mother! Mother! Don't be so sad, mother!"

At the same moment the boy's father, far, far from this quiet home scene, stood leaning against the doorpost of a miserable hut in a Polish village.

The High Command had intrusted Reserve First Lieutenant von Manzdorff with the task of holding the ruins of this village with his company, whatever the cost. The Russians lay over there behind the wooded heights. Any moment an attack might come; for nights like these the Russians usually chose for their desultory raids. So it was necessary to keep a sharp lookout.

Manzdorff could rely on the watchfulness of his outposts. But an inner disquietude made him restless. He felt feverish and knew that something was wrong with him. Could it be typhus? That would cap the climax. To become sick in this wretched hole, so close to the enemy, too sick to be transported before the attack came, and then to be sabred by the Cossacks like a mad dog! A curse escaped his lips. With increasing nervousness he wrapped himself, shuddering, in his rain-soaked cloak.

It was hard for him to get his thoughts in order while these gloomy forebodings racked his brain. Had he not written a letter home two weeks ago demanding a divorce from his wife? Had that not been an unpardonable brutality—in all the strain and suffering of the time to heap that last indignity on her? Would she consent? How did she really feel about it?

He hated the shy, reserved, undemonstrative manner she always assumed toward him. Yet he had found that very reticence in her nature so fascinating when he first courted her. Yes, it was so then. But that was long, long ago. A man's tastes change. Now she bored him; his lively, volatile disposition demanded intellectual excitement, interest in his professional activities (he was connected with the publishing department of one of the big Berlin newspapers); he wanted also to have a little relaxation, to make a little splurge now and then in the gay world, not to be always so frightfully respectable and conventional. For all that, a man is still lord of creation, feels himself keenly in touch with the life around him and craves to enjoy it.

So it had happened that he found a companion who understood him, who could laugh and frivol with him, but who also was capable of talking seriously and cleverly with him about his work; in whose cool, slender hands he had finally laid his heart, and who accepted it in a calm, matter-of-fact fashion, just as if it was hers by right; just as if there was nowhere in the world a shrinking, taciturn, blond wife, who bore his name—nowhere in the world a boy toward whom his heart turned in pride and love.

There were moments between them when the cool self-dependence of his companion appealed to him with irresistible charm. Again,

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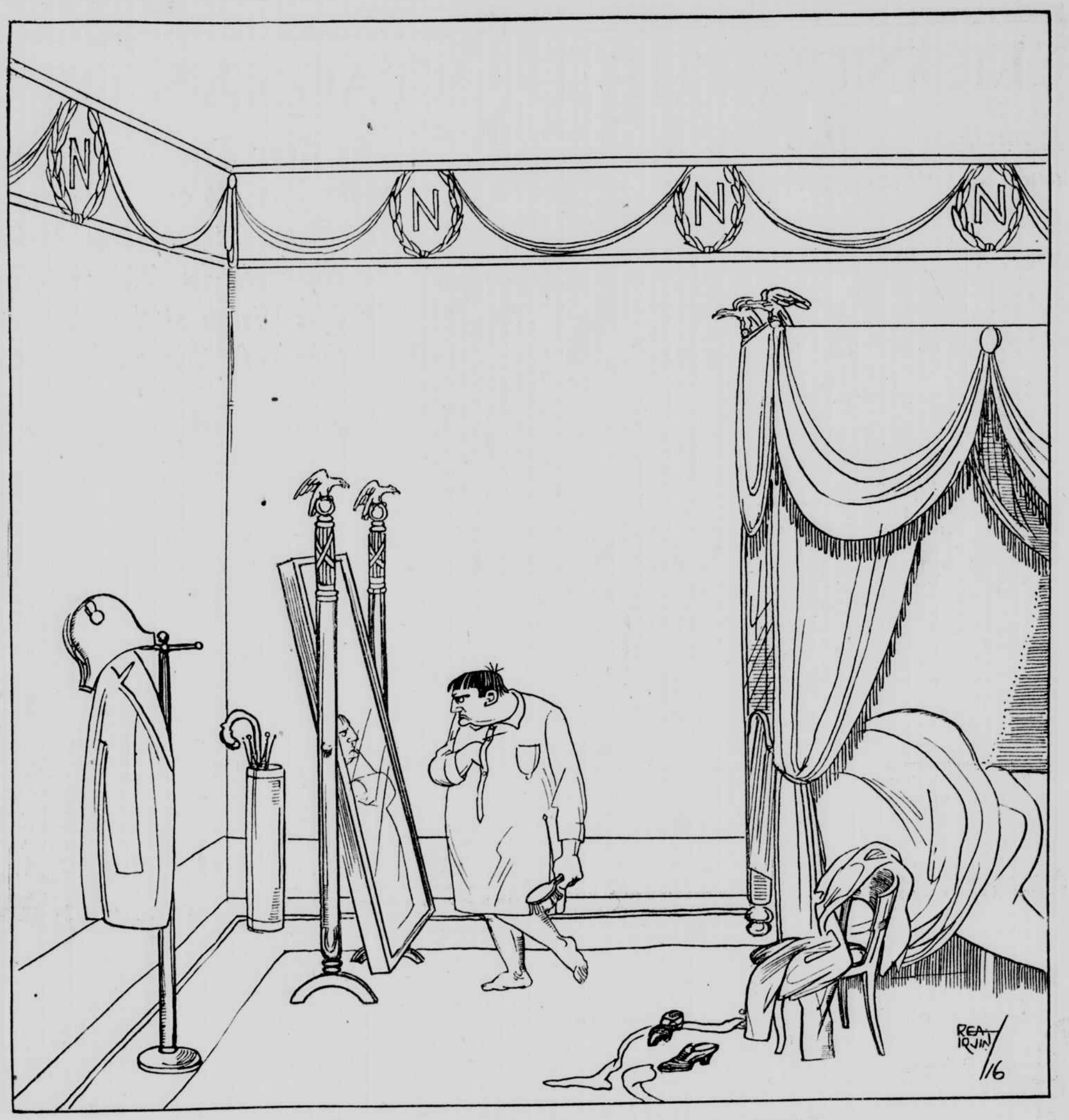
THIS DAY IN HISTORY---*By Rea Irvin*



Napoleon Discovers a New Bit of Business, September 3, 1801.

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By Alice Duer Miller

The Georgia Legislature has adjourned without even considering the woman suffrage bill.

But they did pass a bill permitting women to practise law.

They thought no legitimate means of earning her living should be closed to woman.

And then a wife's earnings belong to her husband in Georgia.

* * * *

It is becoming more and more difficult to make a patriotic speech about American ideals and not to have it sound like a suffrage speech.

Evidently the great and eloquent Roman Catholic prelate was not thinking especially of women when he said the other day:

"It is because every man living on her sacred soil can say those three little words, 'I am free,' whether he be rich or poor; that whatever his creed or color or race he can tread the earth upright and freely measure the power of his brain and the strength of his sinews with all the other men about him; it is because he has a government that he helps to make, that he is hemmed in by no legal disadvantages, that he is neither bondsmen nor serf nor slave; it is because of this and of this alone that every citizen of this land loves her with an undying love and strives for her stability and perpetuity."

Are women citizens, Your Eminence?

* * * *

We note with regret that that eminent anti-suffragist, Senator Vardaman, is not a reader of this column.

The other day, in urging the appropriation of money for those who had suffered from the recent floods, he said: "The people—our masters—whose toil produces the money that we appropriate . . . would approve the donation."

Are women masters?

* * * *

We cannot understand how any student of anti-suffrage literature (and we address the whole audience) can admit the necessity of special legislation to allow the National Guardsmen at the frontier to vote.

The vote is not privilege, but a duty.

These young men are already sufficiently occupied with their military duties. We must not thrust this additional burden upon them.

Besides, they are now represented by their fathers and mothers at home.

Every Guardsman knows that his interests are dearer to his father than his own.

If he asks to cast his own vote he is practically declaring that his father is not to be trusted.

Besides, Guardsmen do not want to vote. Very few of them have come to their legislators personally and asked for this privilege.

It is dangerous to force the vote upon an unwilling or indifferent electorate.

The vote would introduce dissension into the regiments.

We must protect our National Guard from the slightest contamination of politics.

* * * *

Guardsmen, guardsmen, at the border,
Keeping everything in order,
Do you think you really would be
Pleased, as "antis" say we should be,
To have other people say
What you wish Election Day?
Guardsmen, would you really rather
Have your vote cast by your father?
Or, while working for the nation,
Do you feel some irritation,
That hot, weary and remote,
You are not allowed to vote?
Does it seem iniquitous?
Guardsmen, guardsmen, think of us!

* * * *

And speaking of having your vote cast by somebody else, we hear that there were seventy-four women in the comparatively small community at Caldwell, N. J., who wished for the franchise, but whose menkind represented them by voting against the suffrage amendment.

* * * *

"I represent my wife," said he,
"Not, of course, these foolish wishes
To attain the ballot box,
When her sphere is washing dishes,
Cooking, sweeping, darning socks.
She and I cannot agree,
For she simply cannot see—
What I see so very clearly—
That I represent her really;
But, by gol, I do," said he,
"Represent her perfectlee."

A WAR TALE OF THREE

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however great might be the coldness and antagonism between the married pair, the husband, at bottom still uncorrupted, was held by the bonds which a common home and a child create to the wife whom he had once passionately loved.

Even if what was at first a mere imprudence may grow into wrong and unfaithfulness, the acknowledged wife still enjoys the protection of the home which the husband has created for her, and the mistress remains nothing better than the Other Woman, who must stand before the door, stripped of right. But the latter was far more experienced in the art of capturing and holding men than was the shy, quiet wife, who offered her love unreservedly, as from an overflowing chalice. Men do not long for that; a few sweet drops satisfy them better.

In a mad whirl the lonely officer's thoughts galloped through his fevered brain. His burning eyes gazed into the darkness; his teeth chattered with the cold; he clenched his fist. How long would he have to stay here? This accursed weather was too bad even for the Cossacks!

But there—was there not something moving across the fields? He lifted his whistle to his mouth. But before he could give the prearranged signal, he heard the challenge of the advance posts, answered in German. In a moment three men stood before him, covered over thick with mud and slime, scarcely recognizable in the dripping wet and foulness of their great coats.

"Under-Officer Bergner and two men—back from a patrol tour! The Russians have evacuated their trenches and disappeared. The whole front is clear. Nothing is to be seen of the enemy in any direction."

"God be praised! That is sensible of them," answered Manzdorff with an effort, since he was weak from crown to feet and could hardly hold himself upright. "See that you get to the fire, children, and also have something to eat! You, Bergner, come again to me in an hour! We will rearrange the outposts."

"At your order!"

But when the under-officer punctually an hour later re-entered the hut, whose only room left with a roof sheltered the First Lieutenant, he found the latter lying on the floor in his wet clothes, unconscious.

"If only it isn't typhus!" exclaimed the faithful sub-officer.

He made a bed as best he could for the sick man on the miserable straw sheaves in the corner. Then he hastened to the telephone.

Weeks and weeks passed on the Polish front. Deep snow had piled itself like a turreted wall around the little, half-ruined village and melted away again in running streams in the endless days of rain, when the clouds hung like a heavy veil over all the woods and plains. Then came the late winter storms out of Russia's mighty steppes and beat fiercely upon the wretched straw roofs, as if those most miserable of all human beings, the Poles driven from their homes by the Cossacks, now somewhere far away in the depths of Siberia, had weighted the wind with all their passionate imprecations and longings.

Its howling sounded like a human wail echoing down the chimney, and the young wife, who watched in loneliness at the bedside of her sick husband, covered her head in her cloak. She had a deep dread of those stormy nights. But when the faithful Bergner, who had settled himself with her husband's company in winter quarters in the Polish village, or some other of her husband's comrades offered to relieve her she always declined with thanks.

Weeks and weeks passed. Then one morning the staff surgeon stretched out both his hands to her and shook hers as he would have shaken those of a good comrade.

"I think we can see daylight now, gnädige Frau," he said. "Thanks solely to your devotion."

Slowly, almost reverently, he kissed one hand and then the other. They were red and roughened by the hard housework which she had done for weeks and weeks. But who was there to cook and wash and clean except herself? The soldiers, who one and all looked up to her with a shy homage and among whom she moved as tranquilly as among friends and brothers, would gladly have helped her. But she preferred to do the work alone. It made her eyes clear and bright. The worried, harried look came back only when, as now, after the surgeon was gone, she stood alone at the little, scrupulously polished window.

There was a feeling of spring in the air. A sob rose in her throat. The spring would come and bring him new life. But what would it bring to her?

She threw her head back. For a moment it seemed as if all that she had achieved in these lonely hours of watching was about to crumple like a house of cards under the first soft breath of spring, stirring about her. Yet her weakness was only momentary. She must despise herself if she should ever again be a suppliant for his love—if she should ever re-accept it in a spirit of modest effacement. Her pride had been quickened. Her tender body had steeled itself in spite of physical exertion and mental grief. Her dark eyes looked into the future clear and unafraid. She had conquered herself. She knew at last her own worth.

The sick man in the little, painfully neat field-bed behind her had moved. She stepped softly toward him. A shock awaited her. Yet it was a joyful one. For the first time in all these weeks he recognized her.

"Vera! You here?"

There was a note of incredulity in that weak exclamation which chilled her happiness as a March snow freezes the early buds. She merely nodded and stroked softly his emaciated hands. With an effort he lifted one of her hands to his lips and she felt something like the half-breathed flutter of a kiss.

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